

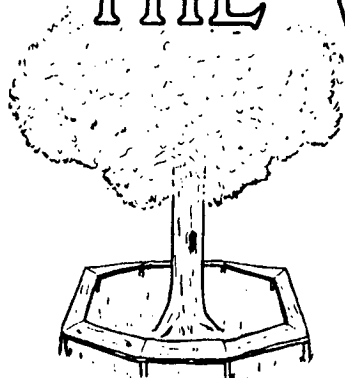
# THE WHITTLERS BENCH

SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P. O. BOX 115 • SOUTHPORT, NORTH CAROLINA 28461

September 23, 1988

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SEPTEMBER MEETING: Our Society will hold its regular meeting on September 29, 1988. We will meet in the Board Room of the Southport-Brunswick Library at 7:30 PM. All members please be present.

The speaker for the hour will be Mr. Wayne Strickland. He will give a talk on the artifacts of the wrecks around the Southport area. The talk will deal a lot with the Blockade Runners of the area.

A BIG THANK YOU: To the Brunswick County Commissioners for allowing the Society to keep the money raised from selling the book "The History of Brunswick County." The total amount of money raised was \$210.00.

SPECIAL EVENT: For those interested in attending.

Annual meeting for The North Carolina Literary and Historical Association and the Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies to be held jointly in Raleigh on Friday, November 4, 1988.

A registration form may be gotten from the Whittlers Bench Editor.

The Cemetery Endowment Fund continues to do well, and also continues to need help. Consider a donation "In Honor" of your family as a Christmas Gift to someone who is difficult to shop for. Our saving account has less than \$100 at the present time, But we do own three \$500 Certificates of Deposit. If you can serve on this committee, please let us know.

## MARITIME MUSEUM SYMPOSIUM

The North Carolina Maritime Museum and The Division of Continuing Education, East Carolina University is sponsoring a Symposium, "Coastal Cultural Heritage: 19th Century Influences". The event will take place in historic Beaufort, N.C. on October 23-25, 1988. The fee for the symposium is \$99.00 per person which includes lectures, materials, tours, social hours, and planned meals. Speakers for the occasion will be Michael B. Alford, Joel G. Hancock, Constance W. Mason, Thomas C. Parramore, Stanley R. Riggs, Nelson W. Taylor, III, and Drucilla H. York.

The N.C. Maritime Museum will offer additional interpretive maritime programs prior to and after the Symposium. The programs are free to the public, and Symposium participants are invited to attend. "Traditional Trades and Pastimes" on Saturday, October 22, and Sunday, October 23, will feature local artisans and musicians demonstrating traditional work and music of coastal North Carolina.

For a registration form and other information write to North Carolina Maritime Museum Symposium, Division of Continuing Education, East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C. 27858-4353.

(The following are some notes I made from reading several issues of The Southport Leader, ~~during the Spring of 1883~~. This newspaper was published during Southport's first "boom" period and was truly a leader in shaping public opinion and getting things done. An earlier newspaper of the town was The Smithville News, the press, type and other materials for which was delivered to the town in March of 1883. It is not known just when publication of The Smithville News ceased and that of The Southport Leader began).

March 13, 1890: The Doubt-Me-Not Club was meeting at the home of Neil Piver. Music and refreshments were the attraction of the evening.

In the same issue, Richard Doshier, Sr. was referred to as a "retired pilot" and capitalist".

Also in the same issue was this item: "The two-story store and dwelling on the corner of Moore and Dry Streets, just completed by Mrs. Mary C. Davis, is the most substantial and showy building in the city constructed for business purposes. Our genial friend Bell has just moved his stock of goods into this store." (Note: This was a frame building later replaced by what we call the Hood Building, now the Doshier Hospital Flea Market Building).

March 20, 1890: In the very next issue, "Joey" Bell, proprietor of the new store ran a large ad in the paper. His speciality was dry goods.

April 17, 1890: "The Misses Emma and Maggie Platt, accompanied by Mr. Robert Fowler, all of Wilmington, visited Mr. Platt on Moore Street, last week." (Note: This is the house of 309 East Moore Street, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Jones).

Same issue: "The Annual Southport Regatta will be held here on July 4th. Among the many races, sail and rowing, the most exciting will be the sailing contest for "The Leader's Cup". The leading business houses of Southport will add lesser prizes to be contested for and the day will be one full of interest to lovers of maritime sports".

Also in the same issue there was a quotation from "The Wilmington Review":

"A gentleman who visited Southport yesterday for the first time in several years, tells us some of his impressions. He says that he has heard considerable of the improvements there but did not expect to find so many. He was much struck with the appearance of the little town, greatly improved as it has been in recent years. The enterprising residents of the town have got improvements on the brain and it is the order of the day now. There is still much railroad talk and hopes that Southport will eventually become the terminus of a great system."

Susan S. Carson, Society  
Archivist & Librarian

## TREES, BRANCHES, AND TWIGS QUERY:

Searching ROBERT POTTER, d in Revolution 1783. Wife Ann Willett. Children: Mary, b. ca. 1775; Robert, b, 1773; Amelia, b. 1776; Lydia; Samuel, b. 1779/80. Was he the son of Robert Potter who d. 1757, New Hanover Co., N.C. Postage refunded. DOROTHY P. MUNSON, 2275 Aaron, B-103, Port Charlotte, FL. 33952.

I am looking for information on a CHARLES FULLWOOD. from Brunswick County. Born about 1760-1770 and died between 1830 and 1840. Any information on who his wife was or where he is buried would be appreciated. MRS DOREEN HOLTZ, 12801 Witherspoon Road, Chino, California 91710.

I would like to inquire about the following Brunswick County families. MARY CATHERINE SCULL married JOHN MILLS VERNON in 1805; NANCY ANN GOTT VERNON, 1st married EPHRAIM VERNON, 2nd JAMES RICHARDS, 3rd THOMAS NEAL, JR. ROBERT CARTER, Route 1, Box 360, Bolivia, NC 28422.

From the Genealogy Committee:

PROJECT 1890 is doing well. There is still time to get in on the fun of reading Old Newspapers. The purpose of the project is to make an index of the names printed in the local newspaper during the years 1890 to 1900 (the actual film covers to 1905, and we should be able to read that far). The Microfilms are in the Southport branch on Moore Street, of the Brunswick County Library. Instructions are in a box near the microfilm reader, with a large sign saying PROJECT 1890, SOUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY. If you have difficulty understanding the instructions, call Abbie Bitney, 457-9466, or Susan Carson, 457-6941.

This index will provide some vital statistics and other information on the residents of Brunswick County for a time period where there are no other sources of information available.

There are four rolls of film, and currently 6 readers. We ask only that you read one entire newspaper at one time, so the next reader can tell where to start. One reader who has a microfilm reader in her home is doing one entire roll of film (she also has the roll of film).

Since our headquarters are in the "Old Jail" here is a complete item I copied from the Southport Leader, March 27, 1890.

"Our commissioners are doing a good work in the complete refitting and repairing of our jail. Two strong iron cells have been built and further work will be done in putting in new sidings and shingling the roof. No further complaints in regard to the jail not being a safe building will be heard. Mr. S. M. Robbins has the contract for these improvements and is make a through work of it."

## CENTURY OR PIONEER

CERTIFICATES HAVE BEEN AWARDED HONORING THE FOLLOWING ANCESTORS:  
Robert Maxwell McRackan; Joshua Sykes (Sikes), Sr., and wife Emory Baker; James Herrington and wife Elizabeth McGehee; William McGehee and wife Ann Moore; Joseph Moore and wife Ann Hodges; George Wortham; Richard Doshier; Needham Gause; Charles Gause. Two applications are pending waiting for proof of residence in Brunswick County.

## MARIGOLD

African Marigold - Tagetes erecta

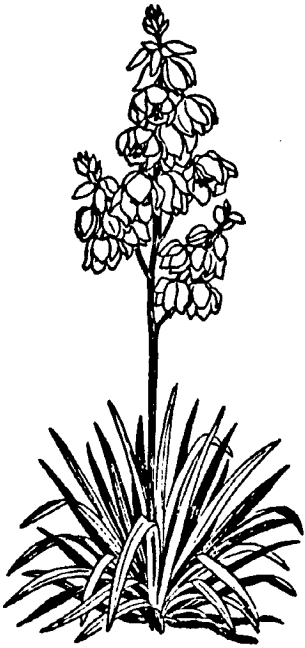
French Marigold - Tagetes patula



The plants we know as African and French marigolds did not originate in Africa or in France, and, strictly speaking, are not even marigolds. Both are actually natives of Mexico that acquired an exotic label on their long journey around the globe. The word marigold probably comes from "Mary's gold," a reference to the bright yellow flowers that were once a symbol of the Virgin Mary. However, these first "marigolds" were an altogether different plant known to botanists as Calendula officinalis and grown in European gardens for medicinal and culinary purposes. Our African and French marigolds belong to the botanical group Tagetes.

Spanish missionaries who traveled to Mexico with the army of Cortez sent Tagetes seeds to Spain in 1520. Their shipment included the tall yellow type which reminded them of the old European "marigold," as well as the dwarf gold and brown species which they said represented the gold of the conquered Aztecs and the bloodshed of battle. In time, the two marigolds were taken from the monastery gardens of Spain to those of France and North Africa where they flourished. In fact, the yellow ones adapted so well to the African habitat, they soon blanketed the countryside. The Emperor Charles V, on a military expedition to Algiers in 1535, assumed they were native wildflowers and took some back to Europe, calling them "Flos Africanus." Thus the golden flower of the Aztecs became the "African" marigold. Similarly, the dwarf species found its way from the monasteries to the royal gardens of Paris and from there to England where it became the "French" marigold. Some historians credit the Huguenots, a group of French Protestants, with taking the dwarf marigold to England when they fled from persecution in France. Because many of the Huguenots were weavers by trade, they often cultivated plants such as the marigold for use in making fabric dyes.

Various sources indicate that the marigolds were known, at least to some extent, in colonial American gardens. After the Revolution, English and Dutch growers exported them to America in great quantities, and in 1783, marigolds began arriving directly from Mexico, too. Since then, marigolds have remained one of our favorite garden flowers. They found perhaps their greatest champion in the Philadelphia seedsman W. Atlee Burpee who in 1920 embarked on a massive breeding program that produced most of our modern hybrids. Today's marigolds are available in an amazing choice of forms and colors, but for the gardener who wants to capture the flavor of the past, the tall yellow and the dwarf bicolor are most similar to the marigolds our forebearers cherished.



**YUCCA** (*Yucca filamentosa*)

Spanish bayonet

Silk grass

Bear grass

The Yucca, one of Southport's most familiar plants, has been cultivated in American gardens since colonial times. The names "bear grass" and "Spanish bayonet," often heard locally, probably refer to the sharp tips on each leaf which can give a painful jab to anyone who brushes against them. One old garden book says that "in the Southland, the children play mimic warfare with the spears of the Yucca." Other names for this plant are Adam's Needle and Threading Needle, no doubt because of the thread-like fibers that dangle along the leaf edges. The domestic records of Mount Vernon, home of George Washington, list it as "Thready Adam's Needle," while Thomas Jefferson's Garden Book calls it Beargrass. Its scientific name, Yucca, is derived from the Spanish name for a similar plant and filamentosa comes from the Latin filum, a thread.

The name Yucca was first used by the Elizabethan herbalist John Gerard, who thought our eastern species was the same plant that the Spanish called Yucca or Manihot, the root of which is the source of cassava and tapioca. Another early writer claimed that the Indians of Virginia used its roots, like those of the true cassava, for making bread, but later writers insisted that this was done only in times of hardship. The eastern Indians did, however, use the long tough Yucca fibers for making cloth, an art that apparently disappeared soon after European textiles became available. They also used Yucca in making rope and baskets.

The Yucca, one of the many New-World plants eagerly sought by Europeans, was introduced into English gardens early in the colonial period. This tough yet graceful plant with its tall spires of waxy flowers was no doubt one of the more fascinating novelties from the colonies, but the Yucca was not entirely comfortable in the British climate. One gardener wrote in 1659: "It is soe tender that wee must keepe it in tubhs to house it in the wynter."

Yucca filamentosa is native to the southeastern U. S. and thrives in dry, sandy soils, even at the seashore. The other species of Yucca, about 30 in all, are found in the southwestern states, Mexico, and Central America. All are members of the lily family. In the wild, Yuccas reproduce readily, but they cannot make seeds without the help of a nocturnal moth known to scientists as Tegeticula yuccasella. The female moth rolls pollen from one flower into a ball and inserts it into another when she lays her eggs. When the eggs hatch, the young have a ready supply of yucca seeds for food, but enough seeds remain unharmed to ensure a supply of new yucca plants.